

United Church of God *an International Association*

Clyde Kilough
Chairman

Roy Holladay
President

Letter from the President September 4, 2003

Dear Brethren,

I am actually writing this letter about a week before you will receive it. By the time you read it we will be in Germany to visit with Paul Kieffer, the resident pastor and chairman of UCG–Germany’s national council, and to meet with brethren from Germany and the Netherlands. While we are there, their council will meet and I will also have a chance to answer questions and update them on developments in the Church in the United States. Norma and I are excited about this opportunity. We will also visit the capital, Berlin, which I understand has changed tremendously since Germany was reunited. I look forward to bringing you details about our trip in the next “Home Office Update.”

It is hard to believe, but this will be the last letter I will write to you before the Feast of Tabernacles. Labor Day (in the United States) is over, and children have started back to school, which means the Holy Days are not far away. Norma and I will travel to Britain this year and are looking forward to that as well. I am sure everyone is excited about his or her destination, be it near or far. In reality, it doesn’t matter which Festival location you are going to, because God’s presence will be at all of these sites (Deuteronomy 14:22-27). Isn’t that what the Feast of Tabernacles is *truly* about? It is not primarily about exotic locations, amusement parks or bus tours. It is first and foremost the opportunity to fellowship and strengthen our relationship with our Father, with Jesus Christ and with one another (1 John 1:3). It is also to reignite a burning vision of God’s plan and the part He has given us in that design for the future. It is to rekindle that earnest, heartfelt desire to work for and to enter the Kingdom of God.

Are we focused on the *real* purpose for the physical life we have been granted? Are we driven by the purpose God has for calling us *now* into His family? A few days ago, we received an inspiring letter here at the office from a donor who clearly recognizes the need to live God’s way and to be about our Father’s business. I would like to share a few excerpts from this letter with you.

. . . I have greatly benefited from your literature because you do stress the will of God and the godly way to live my life. God’s way is the only way we can follow so that we can be blessed by Him with spiritual and other gifts . . .

Last June, I was voted as the Outstanding Training Officer of the Year . . . However, I am not an outstanding training officer because of my abilities. It is because God and the King of the Kings, the Messiah who gave His life for us, gave me this gift. For this reason I do not think that this award belongs to me, but it truly belongs to the Creator and our Heavenly Father . . .

I strongly feel that we are living in the last days . . . The only hope we have is to believe in God and His faithful Son, Christ . . . I have five degrees and all are technical. However, I am fully convinced that technology and technological solutions are not going to solve our problems. We rely on technology for solutions instead of our Creator because Satan wants us to do so. We have forgotten our Creator and we rely on materialism and technology. Truly, the God of Abraham has blessed this nation abundantly with material goods and great technological progress. However, we are forgetting our Creator and we are greatly deviating from His ways that are written in His Holy Book, the Bible.

Many of us accept the life of pleasure and sin. Even institutions that profess that they are Christian are devising their own version of Christianity. It is very discouraging to observe

Christian churches elevating individuals as their leaders that do not live moral lives. Today, humanity is behaving in a worse manner than the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah. Unless we repent, our future as a nation and humanity is dark.

The United Church of God, through your literature and example, is trying to get our sinning nation to change our ways of life so that we do not reap the wrath of God. Your mission is holy and needs to be supported . . .

Keep up the good work. Keep informing the world of the happy news of the coming Kingdom of God and the destruction of the influence of the devil who [has been] deceiving humanity for 6,000 years since the creation of Adam and Eve.

It is easy to think of this world as “reality.” We all lead busy lives that place increased demands on our time, energies and thinking. As wonderful as these daily activities are, do we accomplish them only for their own purposes? As the above letter reminds us, our lives today are to prepare for our future in the Kingdom of God and to announce and promote the message of that Kingdom today by example and word. When we attend the Feast of Tabernacles, we will hear inspiring messages of the Kingdom of God, motivating us to take action *now*. We will once again have the chance to view the real-life picture of the coming reality that will replace this temporary, dying world.

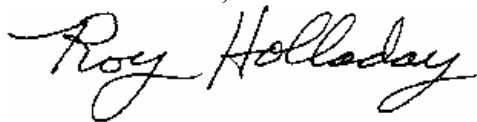
In Revelation 3 we read the following: “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name . . . Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name” (verses 8, 10-12).

Satan has many tools in his box that he uses against us. Two of the more prominent ones of this age are distractions (Matthew 13:22) and wearing us down (Daniel 7:25, American Standard Version). It is interesting to note that one of the promises of the Kingdom of God is rest and peace. We need to make sure that we use the Feast of Tabernacles also for rest and peace—and for refocusing our minds and rededicating our actions to seeking the Kingdom of God. Our strength is limited, but God’s is not. With God’s help we can face all challenges and walk through the doors He holds open for us, keeping His Word and not allowing anyone to take from us what God has promised us.

With this in mind, let us plan and be determined to make this festival season one of overcoming and one of renewing our walk with God. Let us have a Feast full of the vision of the Kingdom of God. Let our minds be full of the promises God has given us, and the spiritual joy in the Holy Spirit that these promises bring. Let us create a foretaste of the Kingdom of God through service, selflessness, kindness, generosity and humility.

We wish all of you God’s blessings for a spiritually energizing and refreshing Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day!

In Christ’s service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roy Holladay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Roy Holladay